This is a sample version of the Guide to Entering VISTA Service that is emailed to VISTA candidates about two weeks before their scheduled start date. The actual Guide includes specific dates and webinar details.

# Guide to Entering VISTA Service

**AmeriCorps**

Greetings!

Thank you for joining AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)! Over the next year you will help mobilize resources and build the capacity of important programs in the communities you serve.

To start your AmeriCorps service, you are enrolled in a **VISTA Member Orientation (VMO)**. VMO is an online onboarding and orientation process that begins before you start service and continues at your project site. Your AmeriCorps service begins on **Monday, [START DATE].**

## KEY DATES

**Tuesday, [week prior to start date]**   Countdown to VISTA Service webinar
see times below

**Wednesday, [week prior]**        Deadline for onboarding coursework and forms

**Monday, [start date]**            Your first day of AmeriCorps service
see times below                 Launching Your VISTA Service webinar

**[First two weeks of service]**      Complete Early-Service Coursework

## PRE-WORK

You must complete five key steps before starting AmeriCorps service:

If these are not completed by the pre-work deadline of [deadline], you will not be able to begin AmeriCorps service on [start date].

1.  **Take** the self-directed pre-service coursework on the VISTA Campus

2.  **Complete** the onboarding forms in my.americorps.gov

3.  **Complete** the online background check:

    AmeriCorps will be conducting online background checks at no cost to the member. You will receive an email from support@checkr.com with

instructions on how to securely submit the required information for the background check for AmeriCorps service. The emailed instructions will be sent 1-2 weeks prior to the start of service, although some members may receive the email later than that. You must complete the online background check information **within 7 calendar days** from receiving the email. If you have any questions, please contact [VISTAfingerprint@cns.gov](mailto:VISTAfingerprint@cns.gov).

4. **Mark your calendar** for your two webinars:

   **[Countdown to VISTA Service\*](#)** (Tuesday, [webinar date], see times below): This live session provides essential information to prepare you to begin service and includes time for Q&A.

   **\*** For better audio quality, call xxx-xxx-xxxx (toll free) and use the webinar ID: xxx-xxx-xxxx.

   **\*** If prompted for a passcode, enter: xxxxxx

   *Because this webinar takes place before you start AmeriCorps service, I realize you may have a scheduling conflict. If that is the case, please email [email] before [webinar date].*


   **[Launching Your VISTA Service\*](#)** (Monday, [start date], see times below): This live session further introduces you to the mission and history of the AmeriCorps VISTA program, gives more detail about your service, and concludes with the oath of service.

   *On this webinar, you will take the oath of service that officially enters you into AmeriCorps VISTA service. It is offered only once, therefore you MUST attend this session. Please add this to your calendar right away so you do not miss it.*

   **\*** For better audio quality, call: xxx-xxx-xxxx (toll free) and use the webinar ID: xxx-xxx-xxxx.

   **\*** If prompted for a passcode, enter: xxxxxx


5. **Attend** the Countdown to VISTA Service webinar (webinar date) and the Launching Your VISTA Service webinar (start date).

   ➢ Click the link above to join and use the passcode listed above, if prompted. No registration is required. If you call in, you will need the webinar ID.

   ➢ Please join each webinar 5-10 minutes before the start time so that you can be sure your computer is compatible with the Zoom webinar platform.

   ➢ The **webinar times** adjusted for time-zones are as follows:

   　　Hawaii Time (HST) – 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Alaska Time (AKST) – 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Pacific/Arizona Time (PST) – 12:00-1:30 p.m.

Mountain Time (MST) – 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Central Time (CST) – 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Eastern Time (EST) – 3:00-4:30 p.m.

Atlantic/Puerto Rico Time (AST) – 4:00-5:30 p.m.

➢ If you are not sure about the correct time zone for you, search Google for "time zone," and the city and state where you will be joining the webinar.

## YOUR FIRST DAY OF AmeriCorps VISTA SERVICE

On your first day, you must report to your AmeriCorps service site at the time and place your AmeriCorps supervisor specified or be approved by your supervisor to teleserve at the specified time. Your supervisor will walk you through the specifics of your AmeriCorps VISTA assignment which marks the beginning of your On-Site Orientation and Training (OSOT). Your OSOT introduces you to your sponsoring organization, the community you are serving, sponsor policies and procedures, and much more. This will likely span several weeks and involve both formal and informal learning.

Also, on your first day, you must attend **Launching Your VISTA Service**. In this webinar, we highlight the AmeriCorps VISTA program's mission, discuss your VISTA Assignment Description (VAD), and direct you to various resources and areas for support. Most importantly, you will take the oath of service which officially inducts you into AmeriCorps service.

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# Have Questions?

**About where or when to report on your first day:** Contact your supervisor at the AmeriCorps project or your AmeriCorps Regional Office.

**Relocating:** Please be sure to thoroughly review the VISTA Relocation Fact Sheet. If you are relocating to serve, the VISTA Member Support Unit (VMSU) will calculate your Relocation Travel Allowance and inform you by email of the amount of assistance you will receive, usually no later than one week prior to your service start date. You will need to complete and submit the Relocation Form (provided in the email from the VMSU) in order to be eligible for the Relocation benefit. If you have additional questions, call the VMSU via the National Service Hotline at 800-942-2677, or email vmsu@cns.gov.

**Special Considerations:** If you would like us to consider any unique, personal circumstances or accommodations to support your orientation—for example,

physical or emotional support needed, gender identity, or learning challenges—please contact the VISTA Training Unit (VISTATraining@cns.gov).

**COVID-19 Related Questions:** Please see AmeriCorps VISTA's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) at www.nationalservice.gov/coronavirus. The FAQs are updated regularly as we gather new information during the pandemic.

**VISTA Campus Technical Assistance:** Email VISTACampus@itcon-inc.com

**Online Background Check Questions:** Email VISTAfingerprint@cns.gov

**Other Questions:** Contact the National Service Hotline at 800-942-2677


Thank you!


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